

PAD 50/62
26 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director, WPIC

FROM : Chief, CIA/PAD (WPIC)

SUBJECT : Release of Film to Agency Components

REFERENCE : Conversations between the Executive Director and Senior Officers of PAD.

Per your request, attached is a synopsis of the reasons PAD (WPIC) is opposed to the release of bulk film, stereo pairs, and photographic prints to analysts of other agency components. These are a reflection of all PAD branches.

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Encl. 1 To TCS 1087/63-KH

Problem:

Should photographic material be released to analytical areas of the Agency?

Assumptions:

1. All special systems materials will be released in quantity.
2. Agency analysts will do their own photo-interpretation in the preparation of reports.
3. Other agency components will procure the specialized equipment necessary to perform their own interpretation.

Facts Related to Problem:

1. A photo interpreter becomes competent only through intensive training and experience.
2. A specialized photo lab is a necessary ingredient of any photo interpretation program.
3. A film library and extensive space is required to store all photographic materials.
4. A reference or information service is a necessary adjunct of an effective photo interpretation effort.
5. A technical support service is necessary to provide photogrammetric information vital to accurate photo interpretation.
6. Joint service ventures result in an exchange of ideas, experience, and techniques vital to accurate interpretations.
7. Duplication of effort is avoided or lessened by centralization of requirement processing and photo exploitation units.
8. Research and development programs are essential to present day photo interpretation efforts in order to provide the analyst with appropriate exploitation equipment compatible with photo collection programs.
9. Time and money expenditures involved in producing duplicate copies of photographic materials to be distributed to part time exploitation units is not an efficient expenditure.

Discussion of Facts:

1. The competency level of NPIC photo analysts is probably higher than any existing group of interpreters. This is a result of many years of direct experience in the field of photo interpretation. It is felt that a photo interpreter becomes competent only after 4-5 years of intensive work as an interpreter. Specialization requires, in addition, concurrent training and study. Photo interpretation is a full time job.
2. The reports published by and the interpretations made at NPIC are the result of a team effort. Frequently, certain specialized laboratory techniques greatly enhance photographic materials. These lab techniques again are the product of years of experience. The collocation of supporting elements such as collateral files, map libraries, technical service units, and graphical arts and editorial personnel each contribute in no small part to the final photo interpretation. For the most part these supporting elements have tailored their files, procedures and techniques to the specialized field of photo interpretation. Reports and interpretations that have emanated from photo interpretation units that have not had the advantages of extensive supporting elements clearly reflect such lack and often are inaccurate.
3. Daily contact with other interpreters, especially those with widely varying backgrounds, results in a cross fertilization of ideas vital to accurate analysis. Also available to NPIC analysts are consultants and intelligence specialists from the rest of the community. Photo interpreters operating independent of estimates, department budgets, and theoretical considerations can provide more objective interpretation or analysis.
4. Present day photo interpretation is a quite different discipline from that which existed ten years ago. The pocket stereoscope and paper prints are seldom used now. Instead complex and expensive viewers, light tables, micro-stereoscopes, magnifiers, macro-scopes, projectors, enlargers, plotters, processors and numerous other pieces of specialized equipment are now in daily use. Continuing research and development programs are providing additional equipment to enable NPIC to produce even finer products. Such programs also must provide for equipment to handle future collection programs. The cost of such a necessary research and development program is considerable.

Conclusion:

The center concept is absolutely essential for the successful accomplishment of photo interpretation by the advanced techniques now in use. The National Photo Interpretation Center is charged with the responsibility to provide national photo interpretation. The purpose of such a charter as NSCID-8 was to centralization as much as possible the total photo interpretation effort. Any act to create additional units would be a violation of such charter.